

Border Eagle

Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas ... Together we 'XL'



Vol. 48, No. 37

www.laughlin.af.mil

Sept. 22, 2000

the inside Scoop

Laughin safety:

Base chief of safety explains how complying to safety regulations can dramatically reduce the amount of annual accidents...

Page 2

A POW remembers:

A base visitor relates his experience as a prisoner of war in Vietnam to base members during his visit to Laughlin Friday...

Page 4

Lemon law:




A base legal office member explains the law that affects car buyers, leasers...

Page 8

Mission status

(As of Sept. 20)

Days ahead(+) or behind(-)

	+ 2.1
	+ .33
	+ 1.95

Fiscal Year 2000 statistics

--Sorties flown: 67,230
--Hours flown: 99,514
--Pilot wings earned in FY 00: 320
--Wings earned since 1963: 11,685

Index:

Viewpoint.....page 2
News.....page 3
XLer.....page 6
Sports.....page 15
Classifieds.....page 17
Newsline.....page 20

2000 Combined Federal Campaign begins

By 1st Lt. Melissa Parent

47th Flying Training Wing CFC project officer

The 47th Flying Training Wing begins its six-week Combined Federal Campaign today, with goals of \$50,500 and 100 percent employee contact.

The CFC, which began in 1961 under the direction of President John F. Kennedy, raises money for over 2,000 local, state, national and international charities including: medical research, children's charities, environmental organizations and disaster relief agencies. Many of these organizations help in the immediate area, such as base agencies and local relief efforts.

Col. Herb Foret, 47 FTW vice commander, expressed his enthusiasm for the CFC during the kickoff luncheon Tuesday, by challenging squadron commanders to strive

to reach 100 percent employee contact within the first two weeks of the campaign. Employees have the right to contribute or not contribute - donations are 100 percent voluntary. To give a visual status of how the campaign is progressing, there will be two displays at the Main Gate. Coming on base, members will see the classic thermometer, which will track the monetary goal. As members leave base, they may see a tote board that represents the major organizations on base, and the percentage of employees contacted.

The campaign will continue until Nov. 3. Organizations are reminded that no other fund raising efforts are permitted to take place on base while the CFC is in session. Please donate through your unit key worker. The following personnel are this year's key workers:

Unit

47 FTW project officer
Val Verde County project officer
47 FTW Staff / Wing agencies
47 SPTG staff / LGS /LGT
47 MDG staff
47 OSS / OG staff
84 FTS

Name

1st Lt. Melissa Parent
Capt. Melissa Cunningham
2nd Lt. Julie Thompson
2nd Lt. Amber McKnight
Master Sgt. William Arnold
Staff Sgt. Michael Hitchcock
1st Lt. Jenn Young



Photo by Airman 1st Class Brad Pettit

(From left to right) 1st Lt. Melissa Parent, 47th Communications Squadron, and Capt. Melissa Cunningham, 47th Operations Group, look on as Col. Herbert Foret, Jr., 47th Flying Training Wing vice commander, signs the Combined Federal Campaign kickoff letter. The campaign is scheduled to last from today through Nov 3.

Unit

85 FTS
86 FTS
87 FTS
47 CONS
47 MSS
47 SVS
47 ADS
47 MDSS
47 MDOS
47 OG / MA

Name

2nd Lt. Emil Bliss
1st Lt. Sue Whalen
1st Lt. Cory Christoffer
A1C Chris Formes
2nd Lt. Kelly Baker
Brian Colonna
Capt. John F. Mileski
A1C Kylie D. Roberts
Tech. Sgt. Alan Mills
Andrew McCullough

Federal employee health insurance participants to see tax break

Federal employees who have Federal Employee Health Benefits premiums withheld from their pay will see more money in their paychecks when a new premium conversion program goes into effect in October.

Premium conversion uses federal tax rules to let employees pay their share of health insurance premiums before tax income, thereby reducing their taxes. The plan is similar to the private sector, which has allowed employees to deduct health insurance premiums from taxable incomes for many years.

"Since the new premium conversion lowers the employee's taxable income, federal employees will save money, not only on fed-

eral income tax, but Social Security and Medicare as well," said Cynthia Birge, chief, benefits services, Civilian Personnel Operations at AFPC. "In most cases they will also save on state and local income tax."

"We feel most of the employees serviced under PALACE Compass will want to participate in premium conversion," added Birge. "However, it is remotely possible some individuals might not want the tax savings for two potential reasons, flexibility and Social Security." Currently, employees have the flexibility to change from self and family to self only or cancel their FEHB at any time. Under premium conversion, employees may make these changes only during the FEHB open season

or upon a qualifying event, i.e., marriage, birth of a child, change in a spouse's employment, loss of coverage because of health plan quitting or becoming insolvent, etcetera.

While premium conversion reduces the amount of taxable income, it may also slightly reduce the base on which Social Security benefits are calculated. There may be rare situations where it may be advantageous to pay full social security taxes rather than lower Social Security taxes under premium conversion (for example, an employee covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System who pays no income tax). These rare cases

See 'Taxes,' page 11

Commanders Corner

Compliance essential to safe Laughlin operations

By Lt. Col. Bruce Juselis

47th Flying Training Wing chief of safety

As chief of safety, I have formed some insights on how to dramatically reduce Air Force mishap rates. I have found that safety is basically a compliance business, if we can simply have people follow the rules established based on years of experience, then we could reduce our mishap rates by at least 20 percent.

In the past year, I have been amazed at the number of aircraft accidents caused by aircrew members who for whatever reason chose to violate established procedures or AFI guidance. Often, this has cost lives and damaged or destroyed aircraft.

Compliance is also an important element of Ground Safety as well. In the early part of Fiscal Year 2000, Air Education and Training Command had a 100 percent fatality rate for people involved in serious accidents that were not wearing seat belts, while those wearing seat belts had a 100 percent survival rate. You can not argue with statistics like that. Most importantly, seat belt use is the law especially when driving on any Air Force base. There is no need to ask an individual if they want to wear their seat belt because they do not get a vote.

Other areas where some people refuse to follow rules are obeying speed limits and drinking and driving/boating. Remember, the force an individual will feel when they hit an object is a function of the square of their velocity. Driving 10 miles per hour over the speed

limit while riding your motorcycle may not seem like much, but believe me, it can have a big impact on your body if you lose control and hit an immovable object.

For the most part I am talking to a few individuals. That 5 percent that somehow never seem to get the word or simply refuse to listen. Most people, as a matter of routine, use common sense and follow the rules. Thank you! Safety professionals need everyone's help to ensure compliance. If you see someone not following the rules, let them know they need to stop. Take action; don't let an individual endanger themselves or others.

Many times people working hard to get the mission done have decided to take short cuts that have resulted in damage to valuable Air Force assets, or even loss of life. AFIs and Technical Orders are written in a manner that allows acceptable risk. Follow the rules and 99.9 percent of the time safety will not be compromised.

Safety is basically simple – be smart, follow the rules and watch out for your co-workers. If we all did this, I can guarantee a 20 percent decrease in Air Force mishap rates across the

board. More importantly, these are not just numbers we are reducing, it is lives that we are saving.

Wing safety has focused on these critical areas which have had dramatic results in mishap reductions. However, I congratulate all of Team XL for the outstanding safety record we have maintained at Laughlin. We have not experienced a serious ground or flight mishap in over two years. Keep up the good work!

“Safety is basically simple – be smart, follow the rules and watch out for your co-workers. If we all did this, I can guarantee a 20 percent decrease in Air Force mishap rates across the board.”

Air Force celebrates 53rd anniversary

By Gen. Charles T. “Tony” Robertson

Commander in Chief, U.S. Transportation Command

The U.S. Air Force celebrated its 53rd anniversary Monday. We have some of America's finest citizens serving in the military, and today's Air Force members epitomize the excellence that reflects all the qualities that make our nation great.

This year also marks the beginning of the commemoration of America's involvement in the Korean War 50 years ago. The Korean War was the first conflict in which our Air Force participated as a fully constituted equal partner with our country's Army and Navy.

The war is noteworthy for tanker and airlift crews and several key developments, which set the foundation for several of the air mobility, core competencies our Air Force supports today. For example, the skies over Korea saw the first combat air-to-air refueling of an Air Force airplane when, on July 6, 1951, a flight of four RF-80s, flying an extended reconnaissance mission over North Korea, were refueled in flight by a KB-29M.

Additionally, the Pacific Airlift effort ultimately resulted in the longest aerial supply line in history, with aircrews delivering more than 80,000 tons of cargo and 214,000 passengers from the U.S. to Japan for further shipment into the combat theater.

Finally, in one of our first forays into combat aeromedical evacuation, return flights to the United States carried more than 66,000 sick and wounded, greatly increasing their chances of survival.

From the military's tremendous combat experiences in the Korean War, our Air Force has emerged as today's brilliant force, the greatest Air Force the world has ever known. You can take great pride in the knowledge that you have participated in the growth and sustainment of that Air Force.

Whether in peace or war, in every corner of the globe, I salute your service to our country. To you who proudly wear the Air Force blue – “No One Comes Close.”

Col. Winfield W. Scott III
Commander
1st Lt. Angela O'Connell
Public affairs officer
Airman 1st Class Brad Pettit
Editor

The Border Eagle is published every Friday, except the first week in January and the last week in December, by the Del Rio News Herald, a private firm in no way connected with the U. S. Air Force, under exclusive written contract with the 47th Flying Training Wing, Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas.

This civilian enterprise Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services.

Contents of the Border Eagle are not



necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the

Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force or the Del Rio News Herald of the products or services advertised. Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use, or patronage without regard to race, color or religion,

“Excellence – not our goal, but our standard.”

– 47 FTW motto

sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office of the 47th Flying Training Wing. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

Deadlines, Advertising

News for the Border Eagle should be submitted to the 47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 338, Laughlin AFB, TX, Ext. 5262. **Copy deadline is close of business each Thursday the week prior to publication.** Advertising should be submitted to the Del Rio News-Herald, 2205 Bedell, Del Rio, TX, 774-4611. Advertising should be submitted by 4 p.m. each Friday.

Submissions can be E-mailed to: bradley.pettit@laughlin.af.mil or reginald.woodruff@laughlin.af.mil

Family Support Center sponsors mini job fair

By Barbara Weber

47th Mission Support Squadron

The Family Support Center is sponsoring a Mini Job Fair with the U.S.

Customs Service Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Mission Support Squadron Conference Room #107.

If you have a high degree of common sense, professionalism, integrity and a desire to work as a federal employee where your military experience will be valued, in a highly visible position, you may be interested in a career as a customs inspector, canine enforcement officer, criminal investigator, import specialist or customs pilot.

If you are looking for a career that can make a positive difference in the life, security and economy of our nation, you'll want to attend.

The job fair is open to anyone with access to Laughlin (regretfully we cannot sponsor individu-

als on base for this event). There is no formal schedule, but recruiters will be available to talk informally with you, take applications and give you insight into a career with the U.S. Customs Service. If your idea of a challenge is a career that takes integrity, professionalism and the personal satisfaction of being on the frontline in efforts to keep illegal drugs off the streets, this may be for you.

This is a great chance for you to learn firsthand about the exciting variety and diversity of career opportunities with the U.S. Customs Service.

To do your own research on careers with the U.S. Customs Service you can visit their web site at www.customs.gov or call 1-800-944-7725.

For more information on this job fair, or for an appointment to get your job search on track, call the Family Support Center at 298-5620.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Brad Pettit

Looking out for exercises

Staff Sgt. Stacey Grabski, 47th Medical Group, peers into a window of the 47th Flying Training Wing headquarters building Wednesday as part of the base Threatcon exercises. Grabski's job in the exercise was to attempt to gain entry into the building and see if anyone would report her suspicious actions.

Exercise notes: "The ORI is over, but we are working to fine tune Team XL's security awareness and our ability to respond to major accidents," said Col. Herbert Foret, Jr., 47 FTW vice commander. "The most recent exercises were conducted to correct some deficiencies and restore total confidence in our ability to successfully meet any challenge. I am pleased to report that the exercises were a success, but there are still a few areas that require some minor tweaking. It just makes sense to practice until we are totally prepared for any threat, catastrophe, or force mobilization. To our friends and neighbors who visit the base, I am sorry for any inconveniences these exercises may cause and truly appreciate your cooperation. **Together we XL!**

AFPC Awards Largest Group of Korean War Service Medals

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas – The Air Force Personnel Center Awards and Decorations section handed out the largest group of Korean War Service Medals, to date, to a veteran from Louisiana Sept. 12.

Lester J. Guidry, a Korean War veteran and the organizer of the largest Korean War Service medal presentation ceremony in Louisiana, drove to Texas Tuesday to personally thank those in the center "who've

helped him ensure the veterans are not forgotten."

Guidry began his crusade in July when he contacted the center to make arrangements to have applications processed and medals issued in mass. Guidry then held several meetings in his hometown of Lafayette, La., where he assisted veterans in filling out the applications and ensuring all the necessary paperwork was provided to the center. He then brought the entire

package of more than 200 applications to the center in August for processing.

"Although we've processed around 1,000 medals total and mailed them to individual veterans, Guidry's is the largest group request we've received," said Master Sgt. Alberto Salinas, Awards and Decorations section superintendent.

The U.S. Air Force is the lead agency to distribute the medals to U.S. servicemen and women from each branch of service.

The Air Force will provide the medal at no cost, and on a first-come first-served basis, based upon availability of medals, to veterans who meet the criteria and submit an application and provide a copy of their discharge paper.

For more information on the Korean War Service Medal eligibility criteria and application procedures, check out www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/awards/.

(Courtesy AFPC)

Actionline *Call 298-5351*

This column is one way to work through problems that haven't been solved through normal channels. By leaving your name and phone number, you are assured of a timely personal reply. It's also very useful in case more information is needed in order to pursue your inquiry. If you give your name, we will make every attempt to ensure confidentiality when appropriate.

If your question relates to the general interest of the people of Laughlin, the question and answer may also be printed in the *Border Eagle*. Before you call the Actionline, please try to work the problem out through the normal chain of command or directly with the base agency involved.

Thanks for your cooperation and I look forward to reading some quality ideas and suggestions.



Winfield W. Scott III

Col. Winfield W. Scott III
47th Flying Training Wing commander

Jogging trails...

Call: I am calling in regards to the jogging trail. In order to cross the street, there is a step down off the curb and a step up on the other side. No big deal unless you are pushing a baby jogger or stroller, in which case it is very hard to do while running. Are there any future plans to install smooth transitions? This will also stop people from having to jog with baby carriers in the street. I would really appreciate something like that in the paper.

Response: Thank you for pointing out where we can eliminate a potential safety hazard and improve the quality of life for all those who use the jogging trail. Expect to see construction by the first part of November.

Pool furniture...

Call: I have a question. The furniture at the base pool is in really bad shape and some of it is probably a hazard. The wheels are busted off, nuts and bolts are missing on the furniture and there is not enough for everybody to sit down. I have spoken to the staff at the pool and they said there is nothing that they can do about it. I thought I would bring it to your attention. I feel it is not safe. Thank you.

Response: Thank you for your concern about the furniture at our pools. Some of our furniture is old and needs repair. We have just completed a maintenance repair project where each piece of furniture was inspected and repairs were made. We hope you will continue to use and enjoy the pool.

POW

Former POW recounts experiences to base members during POW/MIA Day

By Airman 1st Class Brad Pettit
Editor

On Oct. 17, 1967, a 16-plane formation takes off from Korat Air Base, Thailand, proceeding to a railroad target 35 miles northeast of Hanoi. Anti-aircraft fire explodes from the ground below crippling one of the aircraft and propelling it into the right wing of the number one plane in the formation. Seconds later, the commander of the mission is parachuting toward the earth's floor watching villagers – at first specks, but growing larger – run out to meet him. He hits the ground preparing to make a run for it, but is immediately apprehended, restrained and his dog tags are pulled from his neck. He doesn't know it yet, but this is the beginning of a 5-1/2 year entrapment behind enemy lines as a prisoner of war.

Nearly 33 years after that day, Col. (retired) Dwight Sullivan recounted his experiences to Laughlin in a POW/MIA Day speech in the Officer Training Complex auditorium Friday.

Sullivan, a former deputy commander of maintenance at Laughlin, said he remembers the moment he was captured well. "When I hit the ground and they stripped off my dog tags, I learned that the person who got them was considered a hero," the colonel said. "They called the army, and when they got there they paraded the guy around who had my tags. The villagers treated me rather well, but when the (Viet Cong) army took me away, I soon realized that it was no longer going to be friendly."

After being transported from the village to Hanoi, Sullivan was initiated as a prisoner of war. "The first thing they did was tie me up and blindfold me," said Sullivan. "They wanted to know everything about our mission and future targets. My number two guy, the one who had collided with me in the air, was there as well. I tried to stick with the Geneva Convention by giving them my name, rank and social security number, but they didn't like that. They tied my legs together with ropes and bent me over and tied my hands to my legs," the colonel explained. "Then they picked me up and carried me around like a suitcase. After they did this for the third time, they banged my head off the concrete floor. I looked down at my wrist and saw that it was bent under. I had no feeling left in my arm. That is when I knew I had to do something, or I would be permanently damaged," said Sullivan. "So, I started telling them lies."

When Sullivan began to misinform his captors of a "future attack" on a bridge near Hanoi, the Viet Cong brought in several intelligence people with maps of the area. The colonel was then instructed to draw an attack route for the fabricated mission. "I drew them a route that would have taken our planes right over where the heaviest artillery was," said the colonel. "There is no way we would ever have come in that way, but they bought it hook, line and sinker. I stayed in isolation for



Col. (retired) Dwight Sullivan and Col. Herbert Foret, Jr., 47th Flying Training Wing vice-commander, place the memorial POW/MIA Day wreath in a special retreat ceremony honoring prisoners of war and missing in action.

about a week after that, and then I was sent to a camp."

In the POW camp, Sullivan was placed in a cell with another American servicemember, and they remained together there for just under three years. While in captivity, the two cell-mates developed several routines to make the time pass by more quickly. "We would get up at 5:30 a.m. and the guard would come and give us three cigarettes," said Sullivan. "We would smoke them and begin our exercise program, which consisted of sit-ups,

push-ups and walking around the room. We also came up with things to help keep our minds active. We memorized all the United States and their capitols, the books of the New Testament and all the U.S. presidents and their terms in office. One day I would recite this information to my cell-mate, and the next day he would recite the information back to me," Sullivan said. "It gave us something to do to keep our minds off of things."

According to the colonel, the food in the POW camp was little to be desired as well. "For the first three years the menu consisted of "cabbage soup," which was basically cabbage thrown in water," said Sullivan. "Then, we had pumpkin soup for three months and "weed soup" later, which tasted like weeds some farmer had pulled up out of his field."

As the days passed, and the guards slept, the colonel and other POWs began to devise ways to communicate

through the cell walls. In the cell next to Sullivan's was the number two guy who had collided with him during the mission. They communicated about what had gone wrong and how it had happened. "Our communicating consisted of tapping in codes through the walls at first," explained the colonel. "We did that for a while, then someone came up with the idea of using the tin cups we used for drinking to communicate. One person would place the open end of the cup to his ear and press it up against the wall. The person on the other side would line his cup up with the other one and talk into the open end," said Sullivan. "We communicated really well that way."

Two years passed with no change in the living conditions in the POW camp. Then, following a failed Nov. 21, 1970 raid by the Air Force and special forces teams attempting to retrieve POWs at Son Tay, a known POW camp, the colonel and his fellow POWs were moved to a French prison in Hanoi. "We were so excited because we were sure we were coming home," said Sullivan. "There were a lot of us at the new site, so we organized ourselves into a wing and had commanders for each room. We held church services and had guys who would teach classes on areas they knew about like Spanish, French and sailing. We even had some very good storytellers who would act out movies for the group. I remember one guy in particular," said Sullivan, "who tried to act out The Sound of Music."

As the war waned and deals were made between
See 'POW,' page 11

"The villagers treated me rather well, but when the (Viet Cong) army took me away, I soon realized that it was no longer going to be friendly."